

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Currently Amended) ~~An object-model~~ A computer system for capturing information related to product innovation-related data, comprising:

a product idea software interface for capturing an idea for a product in a product idea object;

a design alternative software interface for capturing a plurality of design alternatives for said product in a plurality of respective design alternative objects;

a product requirement software interface for capturing requirements for said product idea in product requirement objects; and

a product fulfillment software interface which captures how well said product function fulfills said product requirements, wherein said product fulfillment software interface further generates responses to queries related to levels of fulfillments of requirements encapsulated in product requirement objects by alternative designs encapsulated in design alternative objects.

2-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) ~~An object-model~~ A computer system in accordance with claim 1, comprising:

a design representation software interface for capturing a representation of said design alternative in a design representation object.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~An object-model~~ A computer system in accordance with claim 1, comprising:

a decision software interface for capturing a decision in a product requirement object, said decision relating to one of said product idea or said design alternative.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~An object-model~~ A computer system in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

each of said product idea object and said design alternative objects are stored in a tool-neutral persistent form.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~An object model~~ A computer system in accordance with claim 1 comprising:

each of said product idea object, said design alternative objects, and said product requirement objects are stored in a tool-neutral persistent form.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~An object model~~ A computer system in accordance with claim 5, comprising:

each of said product idea object, said design alternative objects, and said design representation objects are stored in a tool-neutral persistent form.

10. (Previously Presented) A method for capturing information related to product innovation-related data using a computer system, comprising:

capturing an idea for a product in a product idea object by a product idea software interface of said computer system;

capturing a plurality of design alternatives for said product in a plurality of respective design alternative objects by a design alternative software interface of said computer system;

capturing requirements for said product idea in product requirement objects by a requirement fulfillment software interface of said computer system; and

generating responses, by ~~[[a]]~~ said requirement fulfillment software interface, to queries related to levels of fulfillment of requirements encapsulated in product requirement objects by alternative designs encapsulated in said plurality of design alternative objects.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with claim 10, comprising:  
capturing a function for fulfilling said product requirement in a product function object by a product fulfillment software interface of said computer system.

13. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with claim 10, comprising:  
capturing a representation of said design alternative in a design representation object by a design alternative software interface of said computer system.

14. (Currently Amended) A method in accordance with claim 10, comprising: capturing a decision in a decision object, said decision relating to one of said product idea or said design alternative by a decision software interface.

15. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 10, comprising: storing each of said product idea object and said design alternative objects in a tool-neutral persistent form.

16. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 10, comprising: storing each of said product idea object, said design alternative objects, and said product requirement objects in a tool-neutral persistent form.

17. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 13, comprising: storing each of said product idea object, said design alternative objects, and said design representation objects in a tool-neutral persistent form.

18-20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) A computer system for managing a product design process, the computer system comprising:

a database comprising: (i) a product idea object encapsulating information related to a conception of a product being designed according to said product design process; (ii) product requirement objects encapsulating requirements to be fulfilled by said product; and (iii) design alternative objects encapsulating multiple designs that represent a solution corresponding to said product idea object; and

a requirement fulfillment software interface for processing queries related to levels of fulfillment of requirements encapsulated in said product requirement objects by alternative designs encapsulated in said design alternative objects.

22. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 21 wherein said product requirement objects encapsulate priority information and said requirement fulfillment software interface processes said priority information to facilitate said queries.

23. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 21 further comprising:  
a product requirement decision software interface for storing and retrieving  
information associated with decisions related to requirements encapsulated within said  
product requirement objects.

24. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 21 ~~further comprising~~  
wherein said database further comprises:

product function objects encapsulating information associated with functionality of  
design alternative objects corresponding to requirements encapsulated within the product  
requirement objects.

25. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 24 further comprising:  
a product function decision software interface for storing and retrieving information  
associated with decisions related to functionality selected for said design alternative objects.

26. (New) A computer readable medium containing executable instructions for a  
computer system, said computer readable medium comprising:

code for a product idea software interface for capturing an idea for a product in a  
product idea object;

code for a design alternative software interface for capturing a plurality of design  
alternatives for said product in a plurality of respective design alternative objects;

code for a product requirement software interface for capturing requirements for said  
product idea in product requirement objects; and

code for a product fulfillment software interface which captures how well said  
product function fulfills said product requirements, wherein said product fulfillment software  
interface further generates responses to queries related to levels of fulfillments of  
requirements encapsulated in product requirement objects by alternative designs encapsulated  
in design alternative objects.

27. (New) A computer readable medium in accordance with claim 26, further  
comprising:

code for a design representation software interface for capturing a representation of  
said design alternative in a design representation object.

28. (New) A computer readable medium in accordance with claim 26, further comprising:

code for a decision software interface for capturing a decision in a product requirement object, said decision relating to one of said product idea or said design alternative.